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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000336

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2020
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: PRT SALAH AD DIN: DELISTED CANDIDATES DESCRIBE
OBSTACLES, HARASSMENT

REF: BAGHDAD 0296

Classified By: PRT Salah Ad Din Team Leader David C. Stewart, for reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is a Salah Ad Din Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

12. (C) SUMMARY: Prior to the Cassation Chamber's February 3 decision ordering the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to allow all candidates who have appealed their de-Ba'athification disqualifications to remain on the ballot (Reftel), PRToffs met with two delisted candidates from the Iraqi Unity Coalition (IUC). Both stated their belief that the delistings were politically motivated and had little to do with any links to the Ba'ath Party. They claimed pressure to withdraw their candidacies or even pay off party leaders to clear their names, and expressed serious concern for their personal safety. Both alleged Iranian influence at the root of these developments. End Summary

A TALE OF TWO CANDIDATES: THE SMALL TOWN MAYOR

13. (C) Shouket Abdulrahman Ahmad, the mayor of Yethrib, Salah Ad Din Province, told PRToff on February 1 that he learned of the specific charges behind his delisting on a recent visit to the Accountability and Justice commission (AJC) in Baghdad. Responding to the charges required a second meeting, at which time he presented his case along with supporting documentation. The AJC rejected his request for reinstatement, and advised that he appeal to the Supreme Court. At no point did the AJC provide Shouket documentation to support the charges against him.

14. (C) Shouket emphasized that he is not a player on the national stage, but simply the mayor of a small nahiya (district). He contended the AJC was acting at the behest of Iran and that its thinly-veiled purpose was to interfere with the elections to enhance the candidacy of non-secular parties. He reported that after presenting his case and documents to the commission, he was told the charges against him would be dropped if he agreed to stand down as a candidate. Numerous other Iraqi contacts in the area have told PRToff that Iran is actively trying to influence the elections, and this appears to be a widely held belief, particularly among Sunnis.

AND THE FRIEND OF USF

15. (C) Raad Khatab Muhammed Aliou, a candidate from Al-Alam, has worked with U.S. Forces for years and participated in the USG-sponsored International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) in 2004. On February 1 Raad told PRToff he learned of

his delisting through a phone call January 21 and immediately travelled to Baghdad to address the AJC. He said the Commission claimed the delisting was an error and provided Raad, along with several other delistees, with a memo reinstating him as a candidate.

¶6. (C) But two days later the AJC called him back, saying he was once again delisted because of ties to terrorism. Raad returned to the Commission bearing his IVLP certificate and a photo of himself with Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld as evidence of his support of the U.S. Although the AJC did not specify the charges against him, they told him they could not reinstate him, referring him instead to a judge. Raad consulted with a judge, who told him he could only review his case after the elections. Meanwhile, Raad stated he had also received numerous phone calls from a foreign source telling him to pay up to \$100,000 to get himself reinstated. He ignored the calls.

INTERNAL PARTY CORRUPTION
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¶7. (C) Raad confided to PRToff that he believed the source of the trouble is within the IUC. He alleged that Ammar Jabr Khalil Abdul Hamid, the leader and first candidate of the coalition, was using funds to discredit and remove serious competition from within the list. Raad claimed Ammar was funneling funds through the Provincial Investment Commission Chairman to the Committee in exchange for delisting candidates, paying roughly \$10,000 for each of five candidates. He was aware of the troubles experienced by Mayor Shouket, whom he claimed was also a victim of Ammar's scheme. Now, because names of delisted candidates have been

put into the public domain, both candidates worry that they could be targeted by Iranian agents. Raad told PRToff he believed he would have either been kidnapped or killed if he had continued to fight his delisting.

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